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SUBJECT: USAID ADMINISTRATOR AND U.S. DFA HENRIETTA FORE'S VISIT TO
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

REF: A. KINSHASA 297 B. KINSHASA 279 C. KINSHASA 284

¶1. (U) Summary: USAID Administrator and U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore's March 15-17 visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo focused on Peace and Security, Democracy and Governance, the Environment, and Economic Growth. She met with Congolese leaders including President Joseph Kabila, Prime Minister Gizenga, USAID implementing partners, private sector partners and other bilateral donors, visiting Goma in North Kivu province, Epulu in Ituri District, and Kinshasa. She was accompanied by USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Katherine Almquist, the Ambassador, Mission Director Stephen Haykin and Special Assistant Wesley Wilson. End summary.

Goma

¶2. (U) Administrator Fore began her March 15-17 visit to the DRC in the North Kivu provincial capital Goma, where her meetings March 15 focused on the Goma peace process and sexual and gender-based violence. She urged Governor Julien Paluku to support the Goma process and work to end sexual and gender-based violence in the region (ref A). Paluku stressed the importance of developing roads as a means of stimulating economic activity and reinforcing peace and stability. He thanked Administrator Fore for USAID's support for the provincial government and governor's office. The United States has assisted the North Kivu government and provincial assembly with technical expertise, logistics and commodity support to ensure that new officials possess the necessary tools to improve public service and promote good governance.

¶3. (U) Administrator Fore received a briefing later that day at MONUC led by Head of Office Alpha Sow and Eastern Division Commander General Bikram Singh. Military briefers observed that professionalization of the Congolese National Army (FARDC) will be a long-term process, requiring international commitment to training programs over the next ten years. Civilian personnel provided an overview of a 12-month stabilization program for eastern Congo being implemented by MONUC and other UN agencies. The plan includes four major components: 1) security; 2) political; 3) extending state authority and 4) assisting return and reintegration of refugees, internally-displaced persons and ex-combatants. The U.S. and other donors are coordinating assistance to the region with the program. Administrator Fore expressed the United States' commitment to partnership with MONUC and UN agencies in North Kivu as well as to the Goma peace process and implementation of the Nairobi communique.

¶4. (U) At Goma's Heal Africa Hospital, Administrator Fore witnessed the devastating effects of sexual and gender-based violence on women and girls in the region and visited the fistula repair facilities supported by USAID. U.S. support for fistula repair at Heal Africa provides critical surgery for girls and women. Many have been forced to marry young and lack access to even the most basic maternal and reproductive health services, including labor and delivery at a medical facility in the presence of a skilled birth attendant.

¶5. (U) Heal Africa staff underscored the acute and widespread problem of rape and sexual violence in North Kivu and other provinces. The subject remains a cultural taboo in the DRC, and women who have been raped, and babies born of rape, are often rejected by their own families. Heal Africa has established a significant program to provide medical, psychological and socio-economic support to survivors of gender-based violence called "Heal My People" that is funded by UNICEF and other donors.

¶6. (U) At every opportunity, including a meeting with the local press, Administrator Fore stressed the United States' commitment to the peace process and called for the respect of the rights of women and children. She also highlighted U.S. assistance to North Kivu, including funding for food aid, health, education, democracy and governance, conflict mitigation, social protection, environmental protection, and humanitarian assistance. The United States provided more than \$35 million of assistance to North Kivu and more than \$163 million in total assistance to Eastern Congo in FY 2006 and FY 2007.

In FY 2007, USAID also devoted a \$15 million supplemental grant to supporting peace and security in the region.

Epulu

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¶7. (U) Administrator Fore focused on environmental issues on the second day of her visit. On March 16 she traveled north to Epulu in Ituri District, where she visited the Ituri-Aru landscape at the headquarters of the Okapi reserve there. She observed how the landscape management process initiated by the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) has proven to be an effective model for integrating conservation and development goals, e.g. linking forestry and biodiversity with local livelihood, health and education.

¶8. (U) CARPE's public-private partnership approach, working with companies in extractive industries such as logging and mining, creates both market and social incentives to support conservation objectives. CARPE's landscape program is creating a framework to effectively deal with markets for environmental services such as "deforestation avoided" or REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and ecosystem degradation). In the context of global climate change, REDD -- and potentially, hydrologic services (i.e. watershed protection resulting from forest conservation) and nature tourism -- are developing into mechanisms for sustainable financing of programs linking conservation and poverty alleviation or economic growth.

¶9. (U) Administrator Fore commented that USAID should look at the success of CARPE's Congo Basin Forest Partnership in linking community needs and conservation objectives as a potential model for other CARPE programs. She also expressed concern for the welfare of indigenous populations such as Pygmies, telling the Ambassador that she plans to create a new position of Advisor on Indigenous Populations.

Kinshasa

¶10. (U) On Day 3 of her visit, Administrator Fore held several high-level meetings in Kinshasa focused on the peace process, the DRC's development agenda and the United States' efforts to involve the private sector in economic growth and development. She discussed the future of MONUC and UN support for the Goma peace process at a breakfast hosted by the Ambassador with SRSG Alan Doss,

UNICEF Director Anthony Bloomberg and Lise Grand, Chief of Staff to the Deputy SRSG. At a press conference following the meeting, Administrator Fore highlighted the United States' support for the Nairobi and Goma processes. She announced an increase to more than \$100 million in U.S. bilateral non-emergency foreign assistance in FY 2008. She also called for respect for the rights of women, and the importance of responsible natural resource management and public-private partnerships as engines of economic growth.

¶11. (U) Administrator Fore expressed U.S. readiness to aid Congolese development efforts in her meeting with Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga later than morning (ref B). Gizenga stressed that the DRC lacked viable infrastructure 48 years after independence. He said it would benefit from U.S. assistance in the construction, agriculture and industrial sectors. Administrator Fore noted that public works would create additional economic benefits in the form of jobs. She also highlighted the need for educational, health, and economic assistance for women and children, not only in the east but throughout the country. Gizenga expressed appreciation for U.S. support for and involvement in the Goma peace process.

¶12. (U) At a lunch at the Ambassador's residence, Administrator Fore exchanged views with Fr. Apollinaire Muhongulu Malumalu, of North Kivu, who chaired the January 2008 Kivu Conference on Peace, Security, and Development and is now National Coordinator of the "Amani" follow-up program. She emphasized a clear message of U.S. support for the peace process, continued diplomatic engagement, increased funding for stabilization and humanitarian activities in eastern Congo, and technical and financial support to the structures put in place to implement recommendations of the conference.

¶13. (U) During her meeting with President Joseph Kabila, Administrator Fore reaffirmed U.S. support for development assistance to the DRC and for the Kivus peace process and Nairobi communiqu (ref C). She also emphasized the need for the Congolese people to see tangible benefits of peace in their daily lives. Kabila highlighted his "five priorities" platform, which encompasses infrastructure (including roads), employment, health, water/electricity and education, and expressed interest in revitalizing rural areas. The Ambassador and Mission Director

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Haykin agreed to follow up on governance and development issues with Kabila's designated point of contact, Chief of Staff (and former USAID employee) Raymond Tshibanda. Administrator Fore cited the importance of land conservation practices to rural development and highlighted private-sector development as a potentially stabilizing influence.

¶14. (U) Meeting with key private sector representatives, including existing and potential new USAID Global Development Alliance partners, Administrator Fore focused on enhancing their understanding of and commitment to public-private partnerships with the United States to achieve shared development goals. In that regard, she announced development of the African Entrepreneurs' Facility to support investments in small and medium enterprises and solicited business leaders' opinions on areas where USAID could work together with the business sector in the DRC. Business leaders responded with specific ideas including technical training and governance activities.

¶15. (SBU) Mission Director Haykin announced the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for a new public-private partnership to support development activities in Katanga, bringing together USAID, Katanga Provincial Government, Anvil Mining, First Quantum Mining, Metorex Mining, and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). USAID continues to work with U.S. mining company Freeport McMoRan to bring this important company into the partnership, although they have expressed some hesitancy to take part in an initiative that involves other mining companies.

¶16. (U) Administrator Fore also met with key bilateral donor representatives and USAID implementing partners to reinforce strong exiting relationships with the United States and to encourage them to strengthen ties with the private sector.

Comment

¶17. (U) This was a highly successful visit. As the first senior U.S. official to visit the DRC since the Goma conference, Administrator Fore reinforced the United States' commitment to the peace process and support for the rights of women. Her meetings with the president and the prime minister signaled Mission commitment to work closely at the highest levels to advance our common development objectives. The visit provided an intensive overview of the DRC's complex peace, security and governance issues. It also demonstrated the global significance of USAID's support for the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

Action items

¶18. Significant actions resulting from the visit of Administrator Fore will include:

- a) Prompt consultation with the Office of the President on strengthening dialogue on development issues including governance (ref C);
- b) Raising the level of dialogue on Global Climate Change and markets for environmental services (e.g. carbon credits) through greater consultation between CARPE staff and State and USAID personnel in Washington;
- c) Integrating programs to train public officials throughout foreign assistance activities;
- d) Seeking TDY support for conceptualizing and developing new Global Development Alliances;
- e) Reviewing government and donor programs on improving transport infrastructure to ensure that priority needs are being met; and
- f) Supporting junior officers through mentoring and training opportunities.

GARVELINK